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# Economic and Social Council

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**Commission for Social Development**
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Item 3 (s) (ii) of the provisional agenda*
**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development: priority theme: initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit**

## Statement submitted by World Information Transfer, Inc., a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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Chapter 5 of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (Implementation and follow-up), section B (Involvement of civil society), states that effective implementation of the Programme of Action will require: "Encouraging educational institutions, the media and other sources of public information and opinion to give special prominence to the challenges of social development and to facilitate widespread and well-informed debate about social policies throughout the community."

To this end, World Information Transfer, Inc. (WIT) continues to recommend emphasis on the consequences to human health of specific forms of environmental degradation. The lack of such critical life-saving information exacerbated the devastation from the Chernobyl, Ukraine, nuclear disaster in 1986. The health impact of this nuclear contamination continues to manifest itself in autoimmune diseases of children born more than a decade after the catastrophe.

To foster informed debate on the links between environmental degradation and human health, WIT recommends incorporating environmental health education in public primary and secondary schools. A risk-assessment-based curriculum already exists for grades K-12

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(in English) and is grounded in the methods of scientific discovery.* Therefore, the application of this risk-assessment based environmental health curriculum cultivates critical thinking skills basic to any public policy discussion.

World Information Transfer is providing this environmental health curriculum to a school system in Lviv, Ukraine, with the supporting computers. WIT has also distributed this programme in the Philippines and is in the process of setting up the programme in Lebanon.

It is ultimately the responsibility of Governments to provide public education; however, the content of that education must reflect the new knowledge of toxins in the environment and their impact on health. WIT recognizes the responsibilities of civil society to provide accurate and current information, "to facilitate widespread and well-informed debate about social policies throughout the community". This is in fact our *raison d'être* and the rationale behind our *World Ecology Report* as well as our annual Health and Environment: Global Partners for Global Solutions Conference at the United Nations.

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* K-12 Environmental Health Curriculum developed by WIT Board Member Dr. Bernard Goldstein, Director, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute (EOHSI) of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Unites States of America.